

Policy & Programmes

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Dear Oxfordshire County Council,

Thank you for inviting responses on the Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN). We would like to take this opportunity to highlight our strong support for infrastructure planning for active travel, particularly for long distance journeys that can facilitate alternatives to car travel. We welcome these proposals which seek to make strategic travel by cycling easier.

Thank you for involving the District Council in the development of the project through steering group sessions.

We note that strategic walking may not play a key part of the project, as walking over the distances considered in this project are more tailored to leisure walking and may not address the overarching aim of the project as well as cycling – to facilitate alternatives to car travel. Nonetheless, we would like to request that leisure walking routes are also considered within the project as the benefits of leisure walking are also valuable – for health and wellbeing among others.

The SATN project supports our [Vale of White Horse Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) through progressing measures to support modal shift away from the private car. Reducing car emissions will help to address the climate emergency. Our climate targets are for the Vale of White Horse to be a carbon neutral district by 2045, with a 75 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030.

Promotion of walking and cycling modes through provision of appropriate supporting infrastructure will form a key element of our Climate Emergency Strategy. Our [Climate Action Plan 2022-2024](#) designates an action to “*work with Oxfordshire County Council to support active and sustainable travel in infrastructure initiatives*”.

Our Corporate Plan includes working with partners to produce an “Active Travel Network map” (ATN map). Our aim is to promote active travel by mapping current and required facilities, including cycle paths and bike storage facilities, as well as pavements and footpaths across Vale. The SATN maps help to deliver the strategic level connections across the District. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, which are being developed across the District, will consider more localised active travel journeys.

There are clear economic benefits from having national cycle routes and two national trails running through Vale of White Horse district – the Thames Path and the Ridgeway, which bring many visitors to the district.

We suggest that an interactive map might be good way to display the final outputs. The map should show clearly what the existing network is and the improvements sought to be delivered. The map should also be live, so that it can be updated when infrastructure schemes are delivered.

SATN Supporting Data and Analysis

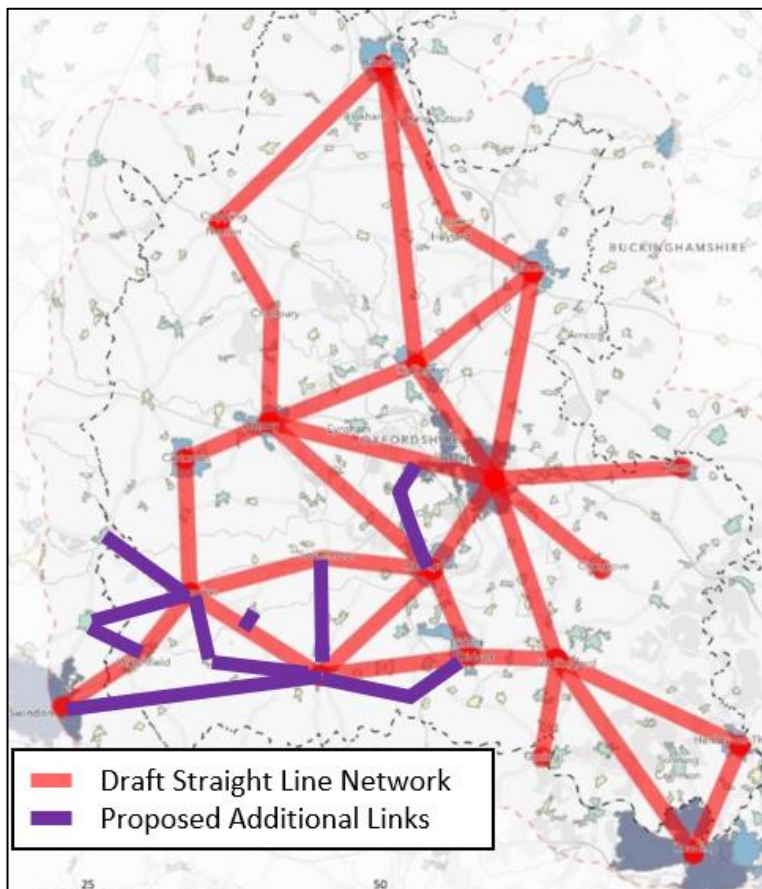
Given the significant time elapsed for travel characteristics to have changed since 2011, as well as increases in the population across Vale of White Horse District (+14.8%) since the last census, the value of the 2011 Census data has largely diminished, and removal should be considered. Census 2011 data is presented on page 2, 11, 12 and 13.

We understand that the National Travel Survey (page 3 & 4) can provide useful national and regional data trends, however, it is less representative for smaller scale areas due to small sample sizes within smaller geography areas (calculated using postcodes). Therefore the Oxford and District data may fluctuate considerably between years and may provide a misleading representation. If work has been undertaken to normalise the data or improve its suitability for smaller geographies it would be helpful if this was shown.

The size and geographical position of a number of the Census Mid layer Super Output Areas located within Vale of White Horse unfortunately do not provide a helpful representation of population density in locations such as Faringdon. The Census Lower layer Super Output Area may provide a more helpful representation of population density.

Draft Strategic Active Travel Network

Looking at the draft straight line network, we offer the following illustrations and comments.



There are some important omissions, most significantly the Wantage and Swindon transport link, as well as the Harwell Campus transport links. As illustrated, we suggest adding links between:

- Wantage – Swindon
- Wantage – Harwell Campus – Didcot
- Abingdon – Cumnor – Botley
- Extension into Stanford-in-the-Vale for Wantage – Faringdon
- Faringdon – Wantage via Uffington (alternative route to bullet point above)
- Kingston Bagpuize – Wantage
- Highworth – Watchfield and Highworth – Faringdon
- Faringdon – Lechlade-on-Thames

It would be helpful if the final straight line network were presented in the context of the existing cycling and walking network, to prevent duplication and to ensure the new network connects appropriately with the existing cycling and walking network.

The additional routes we have annotated [in purple] through Vale of White Horse consider the Everyday Trips heatmap plan (page 22). These include additional routes which link spurs currently suggested within the district, as well as routes to new destinations, and spurs to locations outside of the district. The Lechlade-on-Thames and Highworth routes could be joined up with a route between Carterton and Swindon.

The illustrated route between Abingdon and Botley via Cumnor represents a possible demand for radial type journeys outside of Oxford City, please consider other possible journeys where this may be relevant. A green route ring road around Oxford could be an aspiration, for example, closer than the Oxford Green Belt Way.

When converting these straight line routes between settlements and attractors, it is important to ensure that the route does not miss the opportunity to connect with the District's larger villages, for example Stanford in the Vale. When travelling longer distances cyclists will also need or wish to have the opportunity to stop and use local facilities e.g. shops, cafes, public toilets, and cycle repair shops, this should be accommodated in the plan.

Infrastructure

We look forward to working with you to work up these straight lines into routes on the ground. When considering the infrastructure requirements for SATN route delivery, please consider possible requirements for micro-mobility modes.

Once the SATN network is established we can work with you to safeguard routes as part of our work to develop the Joint Local Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts.

Please ensure that this project captures and coordinates with existing safeguarded transport schemes in our district's Local Plan, infrastructure delivery planning and infrastructure delivery associated with growth locations e.g. Didcot Garden Town. Any existing schemes in our Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan or OXIS (e.g. Cinder Track between Milton Park and Steventon) should be included and our review of the draft suggest these documents have not yet been reviewed.

Yours sincerely

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Senior Transport Planner
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